

this capacity, Nick's priorities included improving roadways and rehabilitating the municipal buildings and public facilities. In 1996, Nick was elected as a Lower Swatara Township Commissioner, serving as the Chairman of the Lower Swatara Police Committee and as Secretary and Treasurer of the State Association of Township Commissioners. During this time Nick played an instrumental role in the formation of the Modern Transit Partnership.

Nick's service with the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners began with his election in November of 2003. He was overwhelmingly reelected to a second term four years later. As Vice-Chairman of the Board, Nick served as the oversight commissioner for many of the county's important functions. He successfully guided the complicated sale of the Spring Creek Health Care Rehabilitation Center, and directed the county's emergency response during numerous tragedies. During his tenure, Nick led the Wellness Committee, spearheaded the annual Ride to Work Day, and partnered with the Salvation Army to host their Red Kettle campaign during the holidays.

His leadership earned him and his fellow board members the "Government Leader of the Year" Award in 2006 from the Harrisburg Regional Chamber and CREDC. Nick also won the "People's Choice" for Public Servant of the Year by Harrisburg Magazine in 2008. I consider myself fortunate to have been able to collaborate with Nick on projects such as the Family Group Conferencing Center for the Dauphin County Social Services, modernizing the Harrisburg International Airport, and making improvements and upgrades to crucial roads and bridges throughout Dauphin County.

I would like to congratulate Nick DiFrancesco on his lifetime of public service and thank him for his outstanding citizenship in the community.

COMMEMORATING HUNGER ACTION MONTH

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Hunger Action Month and to honor the Arlington Food Assistance Center, which is located in my Congressional District.

Hunger Action Month was established to help inform individuals, communities, corporations and policy makers that hunger is a severe domestic issue and deserves our critical attention. The Arlington Food Assistance Center's sole mission is to feed the hungry. This important action allows their clients to make other necessary purchases, such as paying for rent and utilities, without having to sacrifice their health and nutritional needs.

Despite the fact that Arlington County is one of the wealthiest areas in the country, many of our local residents do not have enough to eat. The Arlington Food Assistance Center seeks to remedy this problem by distributing bread, vegetables, meat, milk, eggs, and other food items to those in Arlington who are in need. AFAC obtains surplus food at no cost from local bakeries, supermarkets, farmer's markets, food drives and private donors. Each

week, families with one to three members receive one bag of food and families of four members or more receive two bags of food—amounts that are expected to supplement a week's meals.

I would like to commend the staff and volunteers of the Arlington Food Assistance Center who work hard to provide needy families in Arlington with groceries each week.

IN HONOR OF THE CITY OF IRVING'S SUCCESSFUL USE OF THE LEAN SIX SIGMA PROGRAM

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the city of Irving for its successful use and implementation of the Lean Six Sigma Program.

Understanding the need for a more responsive and efficient government, the city of Irving became the first municipality in the State of Texas, and second in the country, to holistically utilize the Lean Six Sigma Program citywide. Irving initiated this program in October 2007 and expanded it citywide in its efforts to streamline and improve the efficiencies of city operations and staffing structures. The city's emphasis to improve overall customer satisfaction underscores their attentiveness to the concerns of Irving residents and businesses and working diligently to address those issues, making the great city of Irving a better place to live and work.

I commend the city of Irving for its innovative thinking and actively seeking new ways to better serve the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses. Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in recognizing the city of Irving for its successful implementation of the Lean Six Sigma Program.

HONORING THE LIFE OF LT. VERNON J. BAKER, U.S. ARMY CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, it brings me sadness and honor to pay final tribute to LT Vernon J. Baker, United States Army. He passed away on Tuesday, July 13, 2010, at the age of 90, due to complications of brain cancer at his home near St. Manes, Idaho. He will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on September 24, 2010.

Vernon Baker, a black U.S. soldier, belatedly received the Medal of Honor for his World War II battlefield valor after historians concluded he had been wrongly denied the military's top award because of racial prejudice.

Baker, who was born in 1919 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and orphaned as a small child, was raised by his grandparents in Cheyenne. While working as a railroad porter, he decided to join the U.S. Army in mid-1941, a few months before Pearl Harbor. At his first attempt to enlist, in April 1941, he was turned

away, the recruiter stating "We don't have any quotas for you people." Undaunted, he tried again weeks later with a different recruiter and was accepted. He requested to become a quartermaster but was instead assigned to the infantry.

In 1944, Second Lieutenant Baker was sent to Italy with a full platoon of 54 men, assigned to the all-black 92nd Infantry Division. Despite being wounded in the arm in October of that year and hospitalized near Pisa, he rejoined his unit in reserve along the Gothic Line in December.

On April 5, during his company's attack against a strongly entrenched enemy in mountainous terrain near Viareggio, Italy, his company was stopped by the concentration of fire from several machine gun emplacements. He crawled to one position and destroyed it, killing three Germans. Continuing forward, he attacked an enemy observation post and killed two occupants. With the aid of one of his men, Lieutenant Baker attacked two more machine gun nests, killing or wounding the four enemy soldiers occupying these positions. He then covered the evacuation of the wounded personnel of his company by occupying an exposed position and drawing the enemy's fire. In all, Baker and his platoon killed 26 Germans and destroyed six machine gun nests, two observer posts, and four dugouts.

After the end of the war, Baker remained in Europe with the Allied occupation forces until 1947. He later joined the Army Airborne forces and left the military in 1968 as a first lieutenant. It was after these years of service that Baker returned to his northern Idaho home.

President Bill Clinton presented the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for battlefield valor, to Baker in 1997. He was one of just seven black soldiers to receive it and the only living recipient. The other six soldiers received their awards posthumously.

Due to the racial and social strife prevalent in the 1940s, no black soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II, although, Baker did receive the Purple Heart, a Bronze Star and Distinguished Service Cross. Reflecting on life in a segregated Army unit, Baker told The Washington Post, "I was an angry young man. We were all angry. But we had a job to do, and we did it." He added that he "knew things would get better, and I'm glad to say that I'm here to see it."

Baker's actions on the front line demonstrated better than words can describe why discrimination and segregation in the military was both unfair and absolutely inconsistent with an effective fighting force. He demonstrated a degree of courage few people have. "He was prepared to give his life for his country—a country in which he was considered a second-class citizen," said U.S. Representative WALT MINNICK.

Vernon J. Baker was a great American hero who will forever be remembered as someone who overcame unfair barriers and prejudice to change the course of history. He will be greatly missed; however, his legacy will live on as a source of inspiration for generations to come. I extend my sincere condolences to his family in the wake of this tremendous loss and share their enormous pride in all that he accomplished.